

**PRACTICE OF LAW BOARD
STATE OF WASHINGTON**

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March 23, 2009

Larisa Podgorny
[REDACTED]

Bellevue, WA [REDACTED]

Re: Complaint Alleging Unauthorized Practice of Law
POLB No. 09-02

Dear Mrs. Podgorny:

The Practice of Law Board was created by order of the Washington State Supreme Court, General Rule (GR) 25. The Board is charged with the investigation of allegations of unauthorized practice of law in Washington. Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 2.48.180 states that a nonlawyer practicing law or holding himself out as entitled to practice law constitutes the unauthorized practice of law. Court rule GR 24 defines the practice of law. The unauthorized practice of law is a crime in Washington.

As you are aware, A [REDACTED] L [REDACTED] filed a complaint against you alleging that you engaged in the unauthorized practice of law when you accepted \$3,500.00 to draft immigration sponsorship documents and find a sponsor for Mr. L [REDACTED]'s wife. According to Mr. L [REDACTED], he met with you in February 2008. He gave you his existing sponsorship documents and \$3,500.00: \$500.00 to complete legal paperwork and \$3,000.00 for your daughter, A [REDACTED] G [REDACTED], to act as a sponsor for his wife. According to Mr. L [REDACTED], you accessed an Affidavit of Support form off the internet and completed it for him at the meeting, which he mailed to the National Visa Center. Mr. L [REDACTED] included a copy of the completed form with his complaint, dated February 15, 2008. By July 2008, when your daughter still had not completed the forms to sponsor his wife, Mr. L [REDACTED] asked for the \$3,500.00 back, which you paid him in October 2008.

In an interview, you told our investigator that you met with Mr. L [REDACTED] on February 15, 2008. You assisted him by completing a form I-864, which you accessed from the USCIS website. You also

discussed finding a sponsor with him and, during another meeting in May 2008, you offered to ask your daughter to sponsor Mr. L [REDACTED]'s wife. According to you, Mr. L [REDACTED] wanted to pay your daughter \$3,500.00 for sponsoring his wife, which he transferred from his credit card to your account. In October 2008, after your daughter could not complete the sponsorship forms, you paid Mr. L [REDACTED] back the \$3,500.00.

You are not a lawyer. RCW 2.48.180(2)(a) states that a non-lawyer practicing law or holding himself out as entitled to do so constitutes the unauthorized practice of law. Giving advice or counsel to others as to their legal rights or the legal rights or responsibilities of others for fees or other consideration is included in the definition of the Practice of Law. Selecting, drafting or completing legal documents which affect the legal rights of others is also included in the GR 24 definition of the practice of law. By assisting Mr. L [REDACTED] in determining who could and could not act as a sponsor for his wife, you engaged in the unauthorized practice of law. By choosing a legal form off the internet and completing it for Mr. L [REDACTED], you engaged in the unauthorized practice of law.

At this time, pursuant to GR 25(f)(4)(B), we request that you enter into a written agreement with this Board, to refrain from the following conduct:

- Giving advice or counsel to others as to their legal rights or the legal rights and responsibilities of others for fees or other consideration
- Selecting, drafting, or completing of legal documents or agreements which affects the legal rights of an entity or person(s)
- Any activity which is defined as the practice of law in GR 24

We further ask you to stipulate that in the event you violate this agreement, you agree that this stipulation, evidence of your further violation, the investigative report to the Board of your past violations, the original complaint, your response, and all other evidence of such violations shall be turned over to the appropriate County Prosecutor's Office with a request from the Board that that office institute a criminal proceeding against you.

The Practice of Law Board has also ordered to refer the investigation of this matter to the Department of Licensing Immigration Assistance Unit and to the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division as it appears that you are acting as an Immigration Assistant without having a license to do so.

In the event you do not return this stipulation as signed and agreed to within 15 days of the mailing of this letter, the Board will issue its report and consider turning over its investigation along with a request for prosecution to the County Prosecutor's Office.

If you disagree with the POL Board's final action, you may seek review by filing a Notice of Petition for Review with the Washington Supreme Court. The Notice must be filed within 30 days of final POL Board action. You must serve the original Notice of Petition for Review on the Supreme Court Clerk and a copy on the POL Board. Your Notice must set out you name and address, the name and address of your counsel, if any, and a concise statement of the reason for your appeal. Your Petition must comply with the Rules of Appellate Procedure (RAP). For further information on Petitions for Review, please see GR 25(g).

We are hopeful that we will be able to resolve these matters by stipulation. If you are willing to so stipulate, please sign and date your signature and have your signature witnessed by a person over the age of eighteen, who will also sign as the witness. The signed letter should be returned to the Board within 15 days.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Crossland', written in a cursive style.

Steve Crossland, Chair
Practice of Law Board

Enclosure: Agreement to Refrain

JS:as

cc: A [REDACTED] L [REDACTED] (w/out enclosure)